

## Commission consults to review and extend the new approach

*The Commission has launched a public consultation seeking the views from all interested parties on improving "New Approach", in particular in the areas of conformity assessment, accreditation, CE marking and market surveillance. The so-called "New Approach", initiated twenty years ago, has been very successful in enabling manufacturers to sell their products throughout the EU, provided the products meet required levels of safety. However, experience has shown that its efficiency and implementation can still be improved. The consultation enquires also on the Commission's current work on legislative simplification in the field of products. The Commission envisages setting rules common for both New Approach and the traditional method of technical harmonisation (the so-called "Old Approach", under which a full set of technical specifications is required, such as in the sector of tractors). Today the consultation is completed with a questionnaire which all interested parties are invited to answer.*

Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen responsible for enterprise and industry policy said: "We are proposing to make life for businesses easier by offering a more transparent legal framework, at lesser costs and lesser administrative burden allowing the swift, but safe, introduction of new products."

The objective of the review is to simplify the legal framework in the area of technical harmonisation for the future and bring more coherence into existing legislation in the field of products.

The main elements addressed in the consultation document are:

- providing efficient options for **conformity assessment procedures**, i.e. the ways by which a manufacturer can demonstrate that a product is in conformity with legal requirements;
- reinforcing **quality and confidence in the work of conformity assessment bodies** (e.g. certification bodies, testing laboratories) and ensuring coherence of rules for their operation;
- strengthening the **role of accreditation**, i.e. a system of attestation that conformity assessment bodies are competent to carry out their tasks;
- ensuring that the meaning of **CE marking** by which the manufacturer declares that the product conforms with the applicable standards is clearly understood to everybody and better protected;
- reinforcing and co-ordinating **market surveillance** systems, i.e. monitoring to ensure that products placed on the market comply with the legislation and taking necessary action in case the products do not satisfy the required level of safety.

The questionnaire and the consultation document can be both found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/review\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/review_en.htm)

The results of this consultation will be made public on this website. After this consultation the Commission will finalize its legislative proposal that should be adopted by the end of 2006. The proposal should clarify the respective responsibilities of businesses and public authorities both at national and European level in a more efficient way.

### **Background**

Since 1985 the New Approach has given manufactures the possibility to choose different technical solutions to demonstrate that their products are safe and can be placed on the market. By consequence, it stimulated innovation and competitiveness and it became a role model for better regulation. Together with developing the Internal Market, it also ensured a high level of protection of the public interest, such as health, safety, consumer protection and protection of the environment.

### **More information**

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/index_en.htm)